

February
2026

Ø BEAT

PIKES PEAK RADIO AMATEUR ASSOC.



FEBRUARY ON-THE-AIR ACTIVITY: FREEDV!

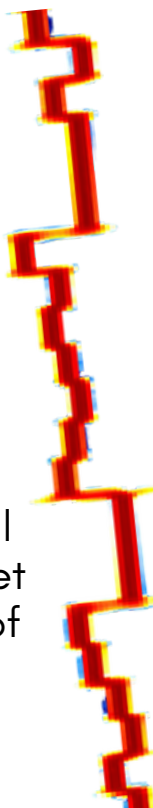
Try this new digital voice mode with friends around the Pikes Peak region on 10 meters.

Date/Time:
20 FEB 2026, 1900 (7:00 PM)

Location:

Starts with a Zoom meeting, with the link to be shared by email. Specific frequencies will be shared in the Zoom call, but we will target the lower frequencies in the phone portion of the 10-meter band.

Prerequisites: 10-meter radio and antenna, computer connected to radio, FT8 working in WSJT-X software, JS8Call also functional; computer microphone and speakers working.



What's Inside

- February On-Air Event
- Board Member Spotlight
- Winter Field Day
- Free VE Sessions
- Save the Date

Contact Zero Beat

Do you have photos of PPRAA events you'd like to share, or news from the ham radio world that the club might like to hear?

Please email
zerobeat@ppraa.org

MEGAFEST RAFFLE TICKETS ARE NOW AVAILABLE!

To buy or sell tickets
Contact Leianna N7ZOO
megafest@ppraa.org
or (719) 271-2961

**YOU
ARE THE KEY
TO SUCCESS!**



Use the working settings from your WSJT-X and JS8Call software to configure the FreeDV software.

Software: Read the introduction and documentation on <https://freedv.org> and download the software from their "Download" page.

Board Member Spotlight

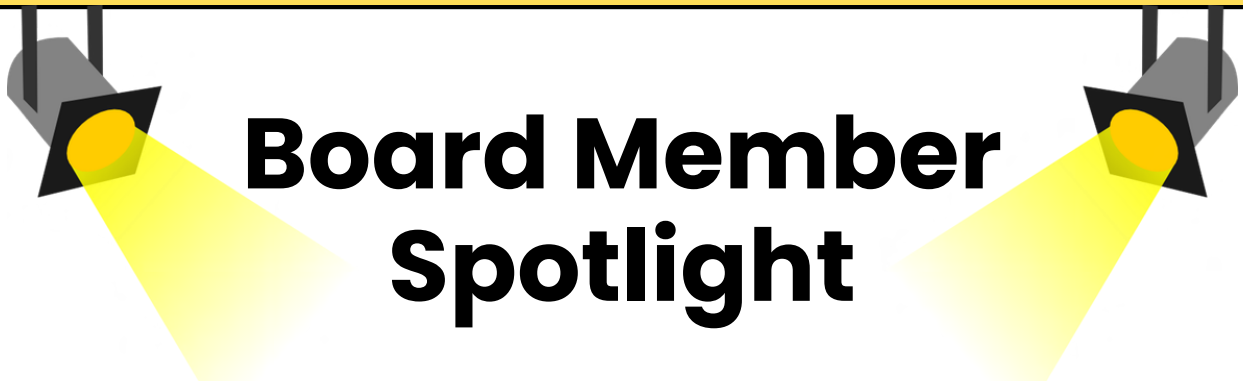
Paul J. Wilkinson / K6IG Vice President

From an early age, I developed a strong interest in science, mathematics, and technology. That curiosity expressed itself through constant experimentation—disassembling devices to understand how they worked, rebuilding them, and modifying electronics simply to see what was possible. This included early efforts to extend the range and performance of over-the-counter two-way radios beyond their advertised capabilities. By the age of fifteen, I had begun programming computers, an experience that decisively shaped both my educational direction and my professional career.

While working as a civilian employee for the United States Navy, I joined the amateur radio club on base. The club offered Morse Code and Novice licensing classes, through which I earned my first amateur radio license more than forty years ago.



After obtaining my Novice license, I continued my advancement by completing the General written examination and earning my Technician license. As a Technician, I participated in a wide range of amateur radio activities, including communicating with astronauts aboard the International Space Station, providing communications support for the Rose Parade through the Tournament of Roses Radio Amateurs Club, working amateur television, and becoming deeply involved in disaster and emergency communications. Over the past four decades, I have been an active member of numerous amateur radio organizations and have held officer and board positions in many of them. In 2004, I upgraded to Amateur Extra, further expanding my technical capabilities and operational experience.



Board Member Spotlight

Board Member Spotlight cont..

Beyond amateur radio, my personal interests include photography and extensive experimentation with microcontrollers and single-board computers such as the Raspberry Pi. My home is fully automated, to the point that some of my pets have learned how to activate lighting systems to avoid navigating stairways in the dark. This work with embedded systems closely overlaps with modern amateur radio practice, particularly as many contemporary software-defined radio applications and digital voice hotspots are built on Raspberry Pi platforms.

Professionally, my career has spanned law enforcement—where I also served concurrently as a reserve officer—advanced mathematical modeling for government “think tanks,” and the development of software for telemetry and radar systems.

I have taught computer science, computer engineering, mathematics, and statistics at the university level, and I was invited to serve as a Distinguished Visiting Professor in Computer and Cyber Sciences at the United States Air Force Academy. I ultimately retired from my academic institution to remain in Colorado.

I am a Senior Member of the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE) and a member of the Association for Computing Machinery (ACM). In addition, I am deeply involved in supporting youth outreach initiatives associated with both organizations, with the goal of encouraging young people to pursue careers in engineering and computing and helping ensure a strong and sustainable technical future.



Winter Field Day 2026

Cheyenne Mountain weather system vs. PPRAA

Dave/N0DMP made an astute observation that the weekends prior to and after Winter Field Day (January 24-25) were beautiful, with temperatures in the 50s and 60s, but during the actual weekend, PPRAA got no mercy from the weather system that enveloped Cheyenne Mountain State Park.

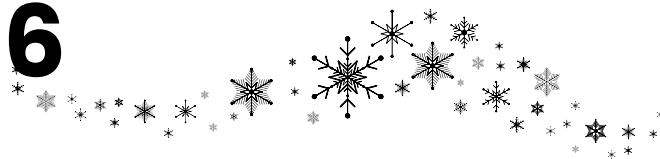
We did not set up in blizzard conditions on Friday before the main event because we loved sideways-blowing snow coating our faces, and icicles forming in our facial hair. We did not drive stakes, tie guy lines, raise masts, and roll out radials because we enjoy freezing fingers. We did not chip ice off the generator cap at refueling time because we enjoyed spending more time outdoors at night in below-zero temperatures. We did not tear down, pack up ice-coated equipment, and skate precariously down a winding mountain road, again in blinding blizzard conditions, because we enjoy the element of danger.

We did all these things because working the whole country and the world, completely off-grid, using the shelter and antennas we established by our own hands, is even more satisfying when we've endured those difficulties. The warmth of the wood stove in the tent is cozier (thanks Ben/AB2SG), the posole is delicious (thanks David/AD0QD), and the chili hits the spot (thanks Jen), when we've overcome these obstacles. The company of our fellow hams is more meaningful when they've had to throw 'er in four-wheel-drive and put in extra effort even to get to the campsite. And when we're working a pileup on the radio late at night, other field day stations often hear our "two oscar" class and tell us to stay warm, and we can take pride not only in making the contacts with ice-coated antennas, but also to tell them, "yes, we're staying warm!" and meaning it.





Winter Field Day 2026



Cheyenne Mountain weather system vs. PPRAA cont...

Thanks to some star operators, like Karen/KF0INE, Ken/K0KWH, Mike/KF0LWE, David/AD0QD, Corey/N0HBO, and LD/W0XLD, we achieved our highest-ever winter field day contact count (1094). We worked all states except for New Mexico and Hawaii, worked Puerto Rico, seven Canadian provinces, and several stations throughout Mexico and South America.



Friday night during station check-out, we did POTA activations for all testing operators, including DX contacts in Europe and even two stations in South Africa. So the gear worked, the antennas stood up to brutal weather conditions, digital and phone modes were exercised thoroughly, and most importantly, everyone made it home afterward with no frostbite!

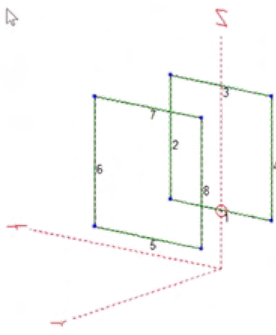
Winter Field Day 2026

Cheyenne Mountain weather system vs. PPRAA cont...

As always, PPRAA is extremely grateful to all who contributed, especially Ben/AB2SG who provided and field-tested the shelter, heat, power distribution, and antennas. All who stopped in, operated, brought firewood or even just stoked the fire and stirred the chili pot were greatly appreciated. When it became a contest between Cheyenne Mountain's winter weather system and PPRAA... thanks to all of you, PPRAA won!



FREE Radio Licensing Test Sessions
Second Saturday of every month
Testing begins at 10 am
Please arrive by 9:30 am
to get signed in and get instructions.
Location: Pikes Peak Regional
Office of Emergency Management
3755 Mark Dabbling Blvd.
Colorado Springs, CO 80907
ve@ppraa.org



March Club Event



PPRAA Cubical Quad Antenna Workshop

A practical, build-it-yourself class
where you'll learn how to construct a
Cubical Quad antenna

When: Saturday, March 28, 2026 (1000-1300)

Where: Penrose Library (Penrose Aspen Room)
20 N Cascade Ave, Colorado Springs, CO 80903

PRE-REGISTRATION IS REQUIRED!

Fee: \$20

This fee will cover all materials
provided to build the antenna.

More details and sign up at
<https://ppraa.org/quad-antenna-workshop>



Mark Your Calendar



General Membership meeting (11 MAR 2026)

Location: Golden Corral
1970 Waynoka Rd, Colorado Springs

The business meeting starts at 7 PM, but you may get your dinner and beverage of choice and check in any time after 6 PM for a social hour. Club members check your email for info or email Officers@PPRAA.org to receive the Zoom information.

PPRAA Megafest 2026

July 25, 2026!



**RESERVE YOUR
TABLE OR
BOOTH NOW!**

For more information visit

PPRAA.org/megafest

Contact megafest@ppraa.org
or call Leianna N7ZOO (719) 271-2961